

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 5 1. A method of distributing at least one item to a first individual, the method comprising:
 - (a) receiving an order from the first individual for the at least one item,
 - (b) generating an order packet corresponding to the order of the first individual,
 - 10 (c) in response to the order packet, shipping the at least one item to a consolidating distribution center,
 - (d) packaging the at least one item and labeling the at least one item so as to be identifiable as intended for the first individual, thereby producing a shipment,
 - (e) transporting the shipment to a substantially unattended secure designated
 - 15 item exchange site (DS) from which the first individual or a first designated agent can retrieve the shipment, and
 - (f) repeating steps (a) through (e) inclusive for a second individual in place of the first individual, using the same DS.
- 20 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the DS is at least semi-automated.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the DS is fully automated.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising accessing the DS by the individual
- 25 though use of a personal identifier in order to retrieve the shipment.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the personal identifier identifies the individual at least in part through information chosen from the group consisting of biometric, numeric, alpha-numeric, alphabetic, physical, statistically assigned and randomly assigned.
- 30 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the biometric information is chosen from the group consisting of a retinal scan, a digital thumb print, a voice print, a chemical skin print, a pheromone print, a genetic print, an odor print and combinations thereof.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the personal identifier is encoded in a physical key.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the physical key is chosen from the group consisting of a key card and a biological sample.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the biological sample is chosen from the group consisting of sweat, blood, spittle, breath, hair, dermal cells, dermal cell contact and mixtures thereof.

10. The method of claim 4, further comprising triggering a notification system upon accessing the secure designated site or retrieval of the shipment.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the notification system notifies at least one party chosen from the group consisting of an item supplier, a distribution center, a consolidated distribution center and the individual.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the labeling is accomplished by a labeling device that comprises information relating to the individual, the individual personal identifier, the order, the at least one item, the secure designated site, the consolidated distribution center, the shipment or the order packet.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the labeling comprises providing a smart chip.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein there is a multiplicity of items distributed.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein a first item originates from a first supplier and a second item originates from a second supplier.

16. A substantially unattended secure designated item exchange site (DS).

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second individuals must be members of a members-only distribution system.

18. A members-only distribution system, comprising

(a) a computer capable of monitoring the distribution system;

(b) a plurality of member individuals;

(c) at least one consolidating distribution center (CDC);

5 (d) at least one substantially unattended secure designated item exchange site
(DS);

(e) at least one manufacturer capable of supplying at least one item to be
distributed by the system;

(f) a plurality of transport vehicles capable of transporting items between
10 components of the members-only distribution system; and

(g) an order from a first member for at least one item to be distributed by the
system.